



FAQs: Air Quality

Was an environmental inspection completed on the school buildings?

Hingham Public Schools contracted an independent industrial hygienist to evaluate all six schools. [Envirotest Lab](#) was contracted. The following message was shared with Doug Foley, Director of Facilities and Maintenance, when the reports were finalized and submitted:

Doug,

It was a pleasure working with you and your staff during this project. I was very impressed with how knowledgeable and efficient your people are with these buildings.

At this point in time, your buildings are working perfectly and efficiently. In my opinion, out of the 20+ school systems I've done this past summer, you guys are definitely within the top three. Nice job!!

Good luck in the coming year and if you guys need anything please let me know.

Sam Cohen
Envirotest

Can I read a copy of the air quality reports?

All of the air quality reports are posted on the HPS website and can be found here:

[East School Air Quality Report](#)

[Foster School Air Quality Report](#)

[Plymouth River School Air Quality Report](#)

[South School Air Quality Report](#)

[Hingham Middle School Air Quality Report](#)

[Hingham High School Air Quality Report](#)

How are Carbon Dioxide levels monitored in the buildings?

Measuring of carbon dioxide (CO²) indoor air quality allows us to monitor the air quality in real-time. If higher than normal levels occur, detectors will alert the maintenance team to inspect and properly ventilate the space.

CO² meters are placed throughout the schools. Some classrooms have CO² meters located on the thermostats. Portable monitors have been installed throughout the buildings which did not have CO² meters. The buildings are monitored with a handheld device daily by the building facilities staff.

American Society of Heating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) guidelines are:

400 - 1000 ppm - Concentrations typical of indoor air spaces with good air exchange

1000 - 2000 - Complaints of drowsiness and poor air

Hingham Public School classrooms generally run at 700 ppm in our classrooms and we certainly expect similar levels with half the number of students per room.

What type of HVAC Filters are installed?

The HVAC system filters in all District buildings have been replaced with new, upgraded filters. We have installed the highest rating filter appropriate to each system. East School and the Middle School have newer HVAC systems and the MERV-13 filter. All other buildings now have MERV-11 filters.

As every system is unique, engineers tested the current HVAC system's compliance with [ASHRAE's COVID-19 building readiness/reopening guidance](#) and made these recommendations based on the ventilation and exhaust system, fresh air intake rates and conditioning, maintenance schedules for the mechanical system, and mechanical control sequences.

All filters will be replaced in accordance with intervals suggested by the manufacturer. We will update the community on all preventative maintenance practices as they occur.

As of October 26, 2020

How will fresh air circulate in the buildings?

All HVAC systems will run to circulate air for several hours before and after the buildings are occupied to ensure safe air circulation. This is in accordance with ASHRAE guidelines to manage energy efficiency and not overuse the systems. CO2 monitors and filter maintenance will continue to be performed to measure air quality and performance of the system.